Banning of Indian drugs by Pakistan

2439. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association has given a representation to his Ministry that Pakistan has banned bulk drugs from India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons behind the ban?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Yes. The Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association had given a representation to this Department on November 1, 2004.

(b) The details of the representation are that Pakistan has a highly discriminating policy against Indian Bulk Drugs according to which import of Bulk Drugs are banned from India once Pakistan has a local production of that bulk drug.

(c) As per the information made available by the High Commission of India, Islamabad, the concerns raised by Indian Drug Manufacturers Association (IDMA) are pertinent since the import regime governing import of Indian bulk drugs is reportedly discriminatory. In this regard, no changes have been made in the Trade Policy of 2005-06 of Pakistan. Importers of bulk drugs have been sensitizing Pakistan Government from time to time as they feel that imports from India would be more viable financially.

Cheaper drugs to BPL people

2440. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to make drugs cheaper, as on today;

(b) if so, the details including drugs targeted for above and method adopted for the same;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal for providing free drugs to people living Below Poverty Line (BPL);

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the details of Ministries associated with the programme and the steps taken to implement above scheme through these Ministries, as on today; and

(f) the total number of beneficiaries of the above programme State-wise and category-wise, as on today?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (f) The Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Pharma) to examine the issue of span of price control (including trade margin). Subsequently, a Task Force under- the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Advisor, Planning Commission was also constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Pharmaceuticals) and the Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Advisor, Planning Commission and feedback from other stakeholders Government have formulated a draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 (Part-A— excluding pricing) which has been circulated to various stakeholders seeking their comments. Based on the comments received the Government is likely to finalize the new Policy shortly.

Under the draft policy there are a few schemes specifically aimed at Below Poverty Line families like national health insurance scheme, Illness Assistance Funds at National, State and District levels etc. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the key Ministry involved with the finalisation and implementation of these schemes.

The above programmes are aimed at covering a substantial segment of the Below Poverty Line population in the country. The exact number of beneficiaries would depend on the final shape of the programmes on finalisation.